183 in time of chaos; then military skills would enable
565 individuals to obtain high positions in the bureau-
555 cracy. But military men seldom won social esteem until they had become cultivated, and such esteem generally accrued to their children, who were given the opportunity to acquire learning under tutelage of well-known scholars due to their parents' wealth.

C. Social Organizations

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Social organizations which had no basis in kinship were not recognized as approved parts of the social hierarchy or as approved means for gaining social prominence. However, they helped to supplement relationships otherwise neglected by the social order. Most of the traditional non-kin social organizations had an economic motivation. The success of such organizations, however, served as a disintegrating influence on the existing social system.

In the rural areas, organizations such as the Red Spear Society (Hung-ch'iang Hui) and the Mutual Protection Society (Lien-ya Hui) existed for the protection of its members against roving bandits. These voluntary associations arose in areas where the government failed to maintain order and peace, and their organization cut across class and occupational lines. When landlords were forced to move into towns during periods of disorder, organized peasants and tenants at times became so powerful that they defied the landlords' demand for exorbitant rents.

575 Among the artisans and workers in China there were for generations both craft guilds or "hongs" (hang) and regional guilds or "pongs" (pang). As in Europe, these guilds were not intended to serve the interests of workers as a class, but to promote the crafts and guard their monopolies and trade secrets. Both employers and employees were members, but the employers usually dominated the guilds' activities.[7]

Another kind of association existed to serve travelers, who were usually merchants, in cities outside their home county or province. These associations, t'ung-hsiang hui, were organized on a county or provincial basis. By maintaining buildings and personnel in distant cities, they facilitated the dealings of their constituents who might have language or other difficulties when traveling.

Most significant and disturbing to the social structure were the secret societies. They were, in fact, hierarchical societies within a society. A notable example was the Ko-lao Hui, which was also called Hung-pang. The bulk of the membership of this secret society was drawn from the unemployed in the rural areas and organized under strict and severe discipline. They were instructed to rob the rich, to help the poor, to rescue the oppressed, and to overthrow Manchu rule. Leadership of this society, however, was in the hands of the landlord class. The Ko-lao

7. Nym Wales, The Chinese Labor Movement, New York, The John Day Company, 1945, p. 7.

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575 Hui became such a strong underworld force that Sun Yat-sen had to solicit its co-operation in his endeavor to overthrow the Manchu Dynasty. After the fall of the Manchu regime, many warlords of North China obtained power by way of the Ko-lai Hui hierarchy and by utilizing its mass following.[8]

While societies like the Ko-lao Hui aimed at the overthrow of the existing order, others like the Ch'ing-pangwere utilized by the Manchu government to prolong its power by extra legal means. The Ch'ing-pang was originally organized among the boatmen and the urban unemployed along the Grand Canal and the Yangtze River. It later spread to big cities and gained recruits among the city poor, handicraftsmen, apprentices, industrial workers, policemen, shopkeepers, the self-employed, and even the civil servants. Ch'ing-pang organizations dominated the underworld of East China while Ko-lao Hui branches dominated other regions of China. The Ch'ing-pang's highly organized strength provided a strong bargaining position for the support of politicians and warlords, as well as capitalists. Even the Kuomintang leaders had to come to terms with the society in their campaign against the warlords, and the Japanese occupation forces during 1937-45 utilized Ch'ing-pang organizations to rout Communist underground agents.[9] With the influx

8. Ko-lao Hui and Ch'ing-pang, Hsi-pei Yen-chiu she, 1941.

9. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

575 of people from East China into Southwest China during the war with Japan, the Ch'ing-pang organization was extended to the Southwest as well.

II. DISRUPTION OF THE TRADITIONAL SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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Just as the scholar ideal and the family ideal helped to preserve the stability of the total social order of China, so did the disintegration of the traditional family system and the abolition of the imperial examination system for recruiting the ruling elite become contributing factors in the dislocation of the traditional social structure.

178 369 565 The traditional rural village community consisted of farm laborers at the bottom and landlords at the top. Peasant landowners and tenants constituted the bulk of the village population; village peddlers, merchants, and artisans were members of peasant families, most of whom owned land; the village gentry, that is to say, the local leaders, were mostly retired officials or educated members of landlords' or rich peasants' families.[10]

178 369 166 However, the growth of rural population without a comparable increase in arable land together with more opportunity for employment

10. Olga Lang, Chinese Family and Society, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1946, p. 68.

596 185 369 As a result, "most marriages are still being contracted after both parties were first introduced to each other by third parties." The report hastened to explain that as the bride and groom gave their previous agreement to the marriage it was to be regarded as a marriage of free will and not to be confused with the old and outlawed practice of arranged marriage.[33]

E. Replacement of the Family's Social, Economic and Political Role

596 575 467 A second step taken by the Communist regime to change radically the nature and function of the Chinese family was accomplished with the establishment of organizations to regiment every phase of human endeavor. The labor unions in the city, the peasant associations, mutual-aid teams, and co-operatives in the country became the center not only of economic life, but of social, political, and indoctrination activities as well. Unions were organized in the cities almost as they fell to the Communist armies, but the formation of comparable institutions in the countryside awaited the gradual process of land reform. Until it was completed in any area, no alternate organization to the family existed to assume its [582] socio-economic role. This fact seem to explain why the Communists during the spring of 1953 limited their Marriage Law campaign in the country side to those areas where land reform had been accomplished.

596 575 562 Special organizations were set up to train and absorb the energies of women and children

33. Ibid., 1002, p. 3.

who might otherwise be free of the constant direct influence of the government. These two groups were absorbed respectively into the All-China Democratic Women's Federation and into the Young Pioneers, the Federation of Democratic Youth, and the New Democratic Youth Corps.

Aside from its primary role as a unit for procreation and for child-care until the young reached an age when they would prove adaptable to molding by the state, the family was left only with the secondary duty of supporting the state training process. An editorial in the People's Daily in mid-1955 pointed out the "deep solicitude" of the government toward children, made manifest by the establishment of nurseries and schools and the teaching of proper attitudes toward children and the correct methods for educating them. "The new Socialist generation" was to be brought up "physically strong, courageous, honest, fond of study, patriotic, and imbued with collective spirit." The editorial also stated that the trade unions were to help office employees and workers to learn how to educate their children: Teachers and directors of the Young Pioneers were to assume the "important responsibility" of guiding children in classrooms, meetings, and extra-curricular activities.[34]

With the Communist regime's emphases on youth, loyalty to the state, socialist construction, and the rooting out of feudalistic and bourgeois ideas, the problem of the proper attitude of youth toward parents need clarification. An

34. Ibid., 1064, pp. 11-13.

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527 of the agricultural year continued to determine the holidays (although national holidays were increasingly observed), and, like the town dwellers, city workers tried to return to their family villages for at least one of the
575 holidays. Another link to one's native place was the system of clubs composed of those city-dwellers who had a common provincial origin; the clubs operated hostels and sometimes made arrangements for mutual-aid. Secret societies provided another focus of social life, particularly in the towns and cities. Their rituals, passports, and secret signs of greeting were all subordinate to their basic aim, which was to provide members with security-through-association and a refuge against the hazards of a disintegrating and increasingly predatory society.

369 It will be noted that the ties of kinship and custom were strong, extending even into the large modern cities and the farm towns. The urban and rural ways of life tended increasingly to diverge, yet one of the strongest cohesive forces of all was the common set of attitudes and values which, even when change has been accounted for, held together all Chinese of village and town and city.

798 away from local witch doctors and, when ill, to consult a physician. And they are warned not to believe in prayer to the images of some divinity, "for these are only of mud and lacquer."[32] At all levels of education and in the annual cycles of "campaigns," such as the Patriotic Hygiene Movement, and the Resist-America-Aid Korea Movement, reference is made to the false and debilitating character of the old beliefs, which are held to be "feudal," "unscientific," "reactionary," etc. It is doubtful that the remnants of folk religion -- in recent years the resort only of the aged and the ignorant -- will long survive the campaigns being waged against them.

575 Another Taoist-linked institution is the secret society. These organizations have traditionally drawn their rituals, liturgies, doctrines, and patron deities from religious and folk Taoism. They have had a variety of social and political functions: they provide, especially in times of disorder, a closely knit confraternity from which the member can draw help and security. They offer a focus of social and religious life particularly appealing to those who travel beyond the limits of their local kinship groups. Throughout the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911), many secret societies had a

32. Fu-nü San-tzu Ching [The Three-character Classic for Women], Shanghai, Hsin-hua, 1950, passim.

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575 strong political function as a focus of anti-dynastic and anti-official sentiment and activity; they made a notable contribution to the victory of the republicans in 1911. Yet Sun Yat-sen found them unmanageable political allies, and by 1930 Chiang Kai-shek -- despite whatever support he may have derived from them in his seizure of power in 1927 -- began to campaign against them.[33] This was interrupted by his campaigns against the Communists and his preparations to resist the Japanese.

575 668 The Communist regime obviously will not tolerate any such closed, self-supporting, potentially subversive groups, and a series of campaigns has been carried out against them. At the end of a major drive in 1953, P'eng Chen reported that "four million duped members had withdrawn from these reactionary sects and societies and that the battle was essentially won."[34] That his claims of victory were premature is suggested by a recent report of the dissolution of five secret society

33. Cf. B. Favre, Les Sociétés Secrètes en Chine, Paris, 1933, p. 177.

34. NCNA dispatch of Sept. 18, 1953, quoted in Walker, China Under Communism, p. 189.

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575 668 organizations in the vicinity of Kalgan. The report accused the societies of elaborate clandestine organizations, hidden headquarters, an elaborate hierarchy of leadership, and efforts to infiltrate Communist organizations.[35] (The societies' power of resistance are discussed in the chapter on Subversive Potentialities.)

575 Secret societies have been particularly numerous and powerful in North China, but those which have had important followings in Southwest China might be mentioned here:

1. Hung-chiang hui. The Society of Redspears, an offshoot of Pai-lien chiao, the White Lotus Society. Once powerful in the north, since 1924 it has been active in Kiangsu, Hupeh, Hunan, and -- in Southwest China -- in Szechwan.[36]

2. Ko-lao hui. The Society of the Elders. It is somewhat more religious than other societies, has a history of resistance to government. Founded in Fukien, has been

35. NCNA, June 16, 1955; SCMP, 1078, June 28, 1955, pp. 27-28.

36. Chan, op. cit., pp. 158-59; Encyclopedia of China Problems, p. 480.

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575 particularly in Central, North, and West China. It is "the most extensive, well-organized, and influential of China's secret societies."[37]

3. I-kuan Tao. The Way of Pervading Unity. Founded soon after the 1911 Revolution, grew rapidly from 1928 on. It gained strength and extended its activities during World War II, especially in Japanese-occupied areas. It was ordered suppressed by the National Government, but its activities have continued and spread.[38] Apparently radiating from a center in Shensi, I-kuan tao groups were formed throughout the Southwest.[39] The society was mentioned in connection with three counter-revolutionary cases in Chungking[40] and was reported active in Yunnan and Kweichow in the Spring and Summer of 1955.[41] This secret society has apparently been resourceful in surviving the concerted and severe attacks of the Communist government.[42]

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37. Ibid., pp. 160-61.

38. Ibid., pp. 166-67; Willem Grootaers, "Une société secrète moderne, I-kuan Tao, bibliographie annotée," Folklore Studies, Vol. V, 1946, pp. 316-52.

39. JMJP, June 5, 1951, p. 3, identified eight sub-groups operating in the Southwest.

40. JMJP, Feb. 7, 1955, p. 3.

41. Cf. SCMP, No. 1001, March 5-7, 1955, [see following page]

575 Farmers active in secret societies, which
565 are traditionally opposed to government control,
184 may have a different set of attitudes toward the nation, foreigners, and the individual's role in society. The I-kuan Tao (Way of Pervading Unity) sect was reported active as late as the summer of 1955 and apparently has survived Communist efforts to stamp it out. Other secret societies are of minor importance in comparison with those operating in Central-South or East China

II. URBAN WORKERS

565 Southwest China had been backward in indus-
178 trial development until the late 1930's when
184 some industrial plants were moved from the coastal areas to places like Chungking and Wanhsien in Szechwan Province. Even as late as 1952 there were still very few industrial workers in this region. Most of them were not organized until after 1949 and were not involved in earlier political movements. Before unionization, industrial workers in Southwest China had no greater national feeling than was commong among the farmers.

565 The Communists' avowed attempt to raise
184 the status of the worker must have given the worker a feeling of importance as he learned of the Communists' economic reconstruction plan. He derives a measure of pride when a steel plant is erected or when a bridge is built, although he may not really believe that the workers, as the Communists say, are the masters of the New China. Other promised benefits, including job security and welfare provisions, also add to the popularity of the Communist regime among the workers, despite the fact that most

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687 The revival of Communist concern with counterrevolutionary activities since 1954 after a lapse of only two years, could indicate an upsurge of resistance against the regime. Nearly all the reports made by the various ministers and deputies from all over China at the Second Session of the National People's Congress in July-August 1955 contained references to serious instances of subversive activity. In Kweichow in 1955, counter-revolutionary crimes of all types were reported to be 13 per cent higher than in the previous year; subversive acts involving murder had risen 27.4 per cent, those involving arson, 90 per cent.

D. Secret Societies

575 687 Secret societies have been a source of irritation, if not subversion, for every regime in China, including the Communist. The latter, on attaining power, took immediate steps to wipe out these clandestine organizations. In the Southwest Region, the Ko-lao-hui sect had been for centuries the most influential of the secret societies.[18]

18. See Wei Ta Fa-shih, Chung-kuo Pang Hui [Chinese Secret Societies], Chungking, Shuo-wen-she, 1949; and Ko-lao-hui Yü Ch'ing pang Kai-k'uang [General Survey of Ko-lao-hui and Ch'ing-pang], Hsi-pei Yen-chiu-she, 1940.

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575 687 Formed at the end of the Ming Dynasty in the seventeenth century, the Ko-lao-hui served as center of resistance against the succeeding, alien dynasty. The sect initiated several organized uprisings against the Manchu (Ch'ing) rulers, and its influence gradually extended to all sections of society. In the last days of the Ch'ing Dynasty, the Ko-lao-hui was one of the secret socities which supported the revolutionary movement of Sun Yat-sen, the leading figure in the founding of the Republic of China. After 1911, the society was an open organization participating in politics. Particularly in Southwest China, warlords relied considerably on this sect for support, and many of the local military leaders were heads of the organization. These militarists either were eliminated by the Communists or absorbed into their ranks when the Red Army overran the Southwest Region. As a result, the Ko-lao-hui has not been active under the Communist regime.

Another major secret society, I-kuan Tao, was practically unknown in the Southwest Region before the advent of the Communists but is now the most active sect opposing the Communist

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575 regime.[19] Founded in Shantung during the early 1920's, it began to spread only in the 1940's. The Communists claim I-kuan Tao received direct financial and political support from the Japanese during World War II to spy on the Nationalists and Communists. As one of the largest secret societie s in North and East China after the war, the sect was asserted by the Communists to have become a Nationalist espionage organization. Whatever the truth of the Communist claim, I-kuan Tao is the most active secret society on the China Mainland. Its influence extended to Southwest China and other regions beginning in 1950. The society is reported to have had a centralized command capable of directing and co-ordinating operations in all regions since 1951.

The suppression of I-kuan Tao was associated with the drive to eliminate other subversive elements. Leaders of the organization were arrested; some were placed on mass trial to publicize their "crimes."

19. See Shih-shih Shou-ts'e [Current Affairs Handbook], No. 4, December 1950, pp. 77-81; No. 6, Jan. 5, 1951, pp. 38-43.

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575 Since 1954, I-kuan Tao activities have increased rapidly. In Kunming, eight leaders of the society were sentenced to death in February 1955 by the Provincial People's Court of Yunnan.[20] One of them was charged with having organized and directed branches of the society in nine counties of the province since 1952. He also was charged with having prepared fraudulent papers, spread rumors, and sabotage planned grain purchases. Another of the leaders was accused of having performed destructive acts in the rural districts, undermined the co-operative movement, and slandered the government's rural political guidance. I-kuan Tao activities were reported to be widespread in the western part of Kweichow,[21] and in various parts of Szechwan. The three widely publicized counterrevolutionary cases tried at Chungking in January 1955 were linked to the I-kuan Tao movement in the Southwest Region.

The Communist regime undertook other than legal measures to suppress secret societies. After they were outlawed and their

20. Survey of China Mainland Press, 1001 Supplement, pp. 16-17.

21. People's Daily, July 7, 1955, p. 3.

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[redacted]

575 memberships dissolved, the Communists invaded and controlled the societies' former areas of strength. This move was largely accomplished through the "democratic reform movement,"[22] which involved mass participation in public meetings, at which evidence of crimes committed by the societies was displayed and people were urged to reveal knowledge of the societies' membership and activities. Another part of the movement consisted of a concentrated attack upon all labor organizations suspected of being under the influence or control of secret socieites. Some of them had acquired leadership of labor groups in charge of wharves, railway, stations, and wheelbarrow "transportation centers." To eliminate the power of the societies, the Communists introduced a campaign to reorganize small transport firms into state-owned companies and to organize workers into Communist trade unions under the disciplined management of Party cadres.

II. CORRUPTION, WASTE, AND THEFT

A. The Three-Anti and Five-Anti Campaigns

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In December 1951, the Communists

22. New China Daily, Oct. 14, 1951, p. 2; Nov. 29, 1951, p. 1; July 24, 1952, p. 2.

slides on a large scale, but in 1953 such equipment 546
was advertised for sale in the New China Daily of Chungking. Slides on maternity hygiene, public health, educational subjects, and current events were available in the market at that time. A set of 36 slides was sold for JMP$130,000 (about US$26, official rate) which was equivalent to the price of 200 pounds of rice.[67]

Phonograph records are used at the cultural centers and recreational clubs, but not as extensively as lantern slides and radio sets. They were also available in Chungking in 1953 for JMP$16,000 (about US$3.20) each, or about the price of 23 pounds of rice.

V. MASS ORGANIZATIONS AS MEDIA OF PUBLIC INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA

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The Communists are fond of using the word "network" for activities pertaining to public information and propaganda. Already discussed in this study are the news-gathering network, radio network, library and book distribution network, and motion picture showing and cultural center network. Included in the Communist term of "cultural network", however, are many mass organizations contributing to the dissemination of public information, education, and propaganda.[68]

One of these organizations is the Sino-Russian Friendship Association. Established on October 5, 1949, in Peking, it expanded rapidly and by February 1952 had 64,200 large and small branches

[next page for 67. and 68.]

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575 with a total membership of 23,000,000.[69] Under
208 the direction of Liu Shao-ch'i (chi), whose position in the party hierarchy is said to be only next to that of Mao Tse-tung, this association, through its omnipresent branches, has been organizing, indoctrinating, and propagandizing people of all professions. It holds small group gatherings in which Soviet theories and practices are presented, discussed, and analyzed, while its members and their friends are urged to emulate their Soviet comrades. Whenever there is a national propaganda campaign, the association mobilizes all its branches to give concerted support to the effort.

Since detailed discussion on mass organizations in China is presented in a separate chapter in this handbook, no attempt is made here to mention the names of all the major ones and to discuss their activities. Suffice it to say that these organizations all have their own "cultural departments" which in reality are information and propaganda units. Generally speaking, the "cultural network" of an average-size hsien may easily consist of as many as 4,000 units with more than 30,000

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67. Ibid., January 17, 1953, p. 3.

68. A list of 96 such national mass organizations is found in People's Handbook, 1955, pp. 7-8.

69. People's Handbook, 1952, p. 258.

575 people actively participating.[70] Although these 208 statistics may not be true of many of the sparsely populated hsien in Southwest China, the scope of the Communist public information program and the effectiveness of the Communist propaganda machine is not to be underestimated.

V. PERSONAL CONTACT

208 Any study of public information and propaganda in Communist China would be sadly incomplete if the important part played by personal contact were ignored. Personal contact actually has been an effective tool in the dissemination of public information and propaganda in a country like China where a preponderant percentage of the population is illiterate.

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on January 1, 1951 issued a directive on the "Establishment of a Propaganda Network Aimed at the Masses." Among other things the directive pointed out that: (1) In the past propaganda work had been neglected, and no permanent personnel had been assigned to conduct person-to-person propaganda to counteract rumors and clarify government policies. (2) All Party branches from that day on would assign propaganda officers, and all guiding agencies in the Party would appoint reporting officers, while enthusiastic activists, although non-Party members, might also be appointed as propaganda officers. (3) Under the direction of the Party, propaganda officers would conduct propaganda by means of

70. Chao Ts'ung, op. cit., p. 36.

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

302 women wearing the dress of the Ming dynasty while the men had to adopt the Manchu style of dressing, as well as the head-shaving. The living had to conform, but the funeral rites remained as before the occupation, 生從死不從, *shêng ts'ung, ssŭ pu ts'ung.* The people had to conform but not the priests; *min ts'ung chiao pu ts'ung* 民從教不從. Hence we have the clean-shaven Buddhist priest, and the coiled locks of the Taoist sect; this is believed to be the original Chinese mode of hair dressing. Moreover the style of garments now worn by the Taoist priests would appear to be the style of ancient China.

When the queue was forced upon the Chinese people it was hateful to them as a sign of subjection to a stronger branch of the Mongolian race. This loathing gradually gave place to pride, and the queue became a national badge, and a sign of loyalty to the reigning dynasty. Hence every rebellion against the Manchus has made the cutting off of the queue of first importance.

The queue, when worn properly, was used to indicate reverence for superiors, respect to equals, and decorum in worship. No inferior would dare to enter the presence of a superior with his queue hanging in front, or coiled round the head; and when worshipping at the temples its position was carefully noted. The following are a few of the kinds of queues spoken of by the Chinese and were indicative of character:

To leave the hair unplaited for three handwidths from the skull in order that the hair might fall loose on the neck; 鬆三把 *sung san pa.* This was for protection against sword cuts, and also in fights, when the queue was largely used to pull with. Its looseness kept the strain from falling on one part of the head.

302 575 The big queue made up of false hair and silk. Those who wear this are known as *wu êrh shên* 吾二神, and are those who have just entered a secret society. They are neither men nor boys.

The dandy of the secret society wears a queue that is dressed up with silk tassels, *têng lung t'iao pien tzŭ* 燈籠條辮子.

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The unkempt queue of the novice who has not entered the society is called *k'ung tzŭ* 空子 *pien tzŭ*.

A few hairs on the back of the head is called *yü mei sui* 御麥穗 *pien tzŭ* or a *hao-tzŭ wei pa* 耗子尾巴, a rat's tail.

A nice-looking queue of a youth with a long red cord attached to it is called *kua tao pa* 鈎刀把 *pien tzŭ*, the sword-handle queue.

The cow's head, *niu t'ou* 牛頭 queue is worn by women of the aboriginal tribes to the west of Kuan Hsien.

A common proverb is *shên hsien yang chih-chia, hsin hsien yang t'ou-fa* 身閑養指甲, 心閑養頭髮; an idle body grows finger nails; an idle head grows hair.

The Kitan tribes, *ta-ta* 韃靼, probably the ancestors of the Mongols, have the following slang names for the queue:

The hairy lid, *mao kai-tzŭ* 毛蓋子; Tartar hair, *ta-ta mao*; the hairy tassel, *mao t'ou tzŭ* 毛頭子; the horse-bucket cover, *ma t'ung kai* 馬桶蓋; the magpie's nest, *ya ch'iao wo* 鴉鵲窩; the tadpole's tail, *ting ting wei* 丁丁尾.

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BOOK III—POLITICAL

CHAPTER I

SECRET SOCIETIES

During the past twenty years the writer's calling has often brought him into close contact with and even into sharp opposition to secret society organizations in Ssŭch'uan. The chief difficulty in studying such societies is, of course, that they are secret, and the divulging of details is likely to be severely punished. 575

The difficulty all missionary societies have had in getting a foothold in Ssŭch'uan is due to the Tang Tzŭ Hang (黨子行), or Confucian Society. The plots of the literati culminated in the riots of 1895. From that year till about 1902 new influences were brought into play by bringing the more lawless elements of society into action. This period might be called the Hypnotic Period; it includes the Yü Man-tzŭ rebellion of 1898, the Boxer upheaval of 1900, and the local Boxer trouble of 1902, when the Boxer bands even entered the provincial capital.

From 1902 a new phase begins, when the Ch'ien Tzŭ Hang (幫子行), or Tally Society, made a movement toward

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

575 the Church to capture it for political purposes, both protective and aggressive. The period ended in the Revolution of 1911.

To be clear, it may be stated here that the Tally Society is the same as the Han Liu (漢流), or Ko Lao Hui (哥老會), and the period may be named the Han Liu period.

After 1911 those who had entered the Church for political reasons tried to get possession of Church property or to start self-governing causes of their own; but always for political or personal advantage. This might be called the Self-government Period.

The first three of the above periods exhibit phenomena important not only now, but acting even in remote antiquity.

The writer believes that this ancient West China fraternity originated in the Totemistic age. That age, which was one of magic, has left many traces, especially in these sodalities. The frequent mention of the dragon in the organization of the brotherhood abundantly proves its Totemistic origin. The leading Elder Brother is spoken of as the "Dragon's Head." The baser sort, who make a living by roving, are called "Rolling Dragons." And a score of similar instances might be given.

Not to go further back than the end of the Chou (周) dynasty, we may divide the society of the time into three classes: (i), followers of Confucius—the reform party; (ii), followers of Lao-Tzŭ—a mystical party; (iii), followers of Nature—a reactionary party that developed into the Han Liu fraternity. These three schools of thought can be distinctly seen in the secret society organizations of West China to-day.

The Confucian Society, Tang Tzŭ Hang (黨子行)

The School, or Society, is very ancient and has always borne an agnostic stamp, both in literature and religion.

The worship of Confucius is a very real thing in China, and the substitution of a tablet for an image, a change made by the Republic, is very superficial. But few, if any, of the Confucian schools have ever been satisfied with the worship

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of Confucius alone, but freely indulged in the worship of ancestors, and have invited the aid of the Shaman brethren when expedient or when sickness or death in the family made it necessary. Thus, the Confucian scholar may also be a follower of both the mystical and naturalistic schools.

It is readily understood that the class of persons who enter the Confucian Society is different in caste and calibre from those of other societies; but it must be remembered that the agreement is equally binding and the political consequences even more serious than in the case of other societies, and it has been the source of revolutionary activities of great importance.

The Confucian Society is the society *par excellence* of the official, scholar, and student. In its present form it dates at least from the T'ang dynasty, when the followers of the "Peach Orchard" trio refused to recognize the T'ang and clave to the Han (漢) and Liu (劉), and are called Han Liu (漢流).[1]

The Mystical or Hypnotic Sect, Chiao-fei (教匪)

The Hypnotic School has always been closely connected with the Taoist sect, with charms, trances, and spells of various kinds; and it may be that some of the exploits attributed to ancient heroes were done under hypnotic influence. The trances, etc., are brought about by regular training of mind and body, a rigid concentration of spirit, and complete submission of the being to the domination of some particular demon: when the training is complete the whole person is under the mesmeric control of the demon.

The rallying centre of these hypnotic sects is generally a living goddess of mercy, usually a girl of sixteen or eighteen or even younger; doubtless the remnant of a cruder, naturalistic system of great antiquity.

There is quite a long list of these sects which have caused insurrection and bloodshed in different parts of

(1) Though the characters are different some Chinese give this explanation of Han Liu.

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575 the country. These religious fanatics, *chiao fei*, have caused much more difficulty to the government than the ordinary *ku-fei* (喝匪) (*v. inf.*) The latter rob for their sustenance, and having stolen enough they live luxuriously till there is need for another raid to get more funds. But the religious fanatics are of a very different character.

Such societies seek first by charms and vegetarian vows to win the rich and landed classes. They promise immortality as the reward of large liberality and abstinence from fornication, wine, and pork. The entrance fee is generally small, but members have only the common purse; even rice and clothing are held for the common use.

Having gained a footing among the rich, they next win over the village headmen, and finally the retainers of the district magistrate. When trouble arises, the magistrate may send to suppress it and may even raid the Society's headquarters; but care is taken that the propagandists are protected and escorted to their resorts in the southern mountains.

Such societies may differ in the charms they use and the idols they worship; but they have mesmeric hypnotism and fanatical trances as their common feature.

In this category are included the White Lotus Society (白蓮教), the Arabic (天方),[1] the Eight-Diagram Society (八卦), the Red Lantern Society (紅燈敎), the United Fists Society (義和拳), the Big Sword Society (大刀會), the Lamp-wick Society (燈花教), and others.

The many rebellious movements and rebel leaders with which and with whom these Societies are connected will be found in history.

In Ssŭch'uan many people knew the Boxer arts before 1900, especially round such centres as Paoning (保寧), Mienchou (綿州), and Chin T'ang hsien (金堂); but there was not enough strength or organization for a rising.

The hypnotic arts are still practised in secret in different parts of the province, but more especially in the North, their

(1) This might mean "square heavens."

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original home. The vows used are many and various, but the chief are for the purification of the body and of the mouth. Their charms also are very abundant, the chief ones being the Kao Wang (高王符) charm and the Goddess of Mercy (觀音) charm. 575

In 1905 a hypnotic sect entered Ssŭch'uan from Shensi and disturbed the eastern and southern parts of the province. It was known as the Ch'ing Ch'a Chiao (清察教). Its charms were similar to those of the Red Lantern Society; but the vows were different and seem to have originated in the Yangtze provinces, for the "tea-planter's ballad" was used in the religious observances.

During the short reign of Hsüan T'ung a religious sect drilled and caused trouble in eastern Ssŭch'uan; but they never got out of control owing to the severe measures taken against them by the authorities.

The Reactionary School, or Han Liu (漢流)

This is our third great class of secret societies. It must be borne in mind that our division is by no means arbitrary. It is quite possible for a person to belong to all three classes; on the other hand there has sometimes been strife, especially between the Hypnotic and the Reactionary Schools.

Investigating the origin of this School we find it begins in hoary antiquity, and probably represents the most ancient demon worship. The class tenaciously holds to natural depravity, resists external reforms, and through the ages has made licentious liberty the chief ideal of life.

The heroes worshipped are the "Peach Orchard" trio of the Han dynasty; but they have also a system of Shamanism probably of much earlier date, and including all manner of sorceries' and wizards' art.

Among other terms the brethren call themselves *tsa-mên ti-hsiung* (咱們弟兄), we brethren. *Tsa-mên* is of northern origin and Shamanism had its origin in Northern Asia; hence I believe this brotherhood to be Asiatic Shamanism. This system of Shamanism has very wide ramifications in Central

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575 Asia, where neither race nor religion seems to debar any one from joining the secret conclaves. On the Tibetan border Chinese and aboriginals make sworn covenants for mutual protection and assistance in business matters. No Chinese could prosper in barter trade with Tibetans unless he was a member of this Society; he would most likely be robbed and killed on his first journey.

The sorcery practices which are such a feature in this brotherhood are presided over by a system of lay Taoist priests called *ho-chü-tao* (夥居道). These men, though knowing all the arts of the exorcist and much of the doctrine of Tao, are not celibates or hermits, as in the regular priesthood, but have their homes among men and around their ancestral tablets.

The Society delights in sorcery and wizardry, and on the slightest pretext members present one another with a "pacification concert." Such occasions as a sickness in the family, a slight bodily injury, an unlucky omen, etc., are seized on as excuses for a midnight orgy to expel some troublesome demon. At the close of such uproarious nocturnal performances the baser sort amuse themselves by committing robberies on their way home in the small hours.

The weird music connected with Shaman worship needs to be heard, for no pen can describe the uncanny effects; the drum of the temple, the blast of the trumpet, the conch horn of the wizard, the hooting cow's horns of the priests, the clash of cymbals, the crash of gongs, the howling of demon-oppressed people, the cry to departing spirits, are all directly or indirectly related to this brotherhood.

Many primitive and objectionable customs are still practised in the sect. Marriage by capture is by no means unknown, and to many it is the ideal method. Eating the liver and the heart of an enemy, or distributing parts of his body to distant places for others to eat; the sacrifice of human victims to the flags or to the spirit of a fallen comrade, are customs still practised. The Society has thus earned the name *ho-êrh-liu* (和而流), or loose profligates.

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The Ssŭch'uan Ku-lu-tzŭ (嘓嚕子)

The province was practically depopulated by the robber bands of Li Tzŭ-ch'êng (李自成), Chang Hsien-chung (張獻忠), Wang San-huai (王三槐), and others. Many were slaughtered, many fled. Afterwards immigrants from Hupei, Hunan, and other provinces occupied the deserted soil and bound themselves by oaths for mutual protection against remnants of robber bands or returning émigrés. 575

Many old inhabitants returned, to find their lands in possession of strangers. Such people, the weak taking to beggary, the strong to robbery, together with the scattered remnants of the earlier robber bands, all together received the name of *ku-lu-tzŭ*.

This term is peculiar to Ssŭch'uan and it was contracted into *ku-fei* (嘓匪). The explanation of this is not satisfactory. The *Kuang Yün* (廣韻) says that *ku* resembles the sound of quacking and gabbling, while *lu* means flattering words such as beggars use. The *Chêng Tzŭ T'ung* (正字通) speaks of *tu-lu* (吐嚕) as meaning *k'o-hsi* (可惜), a term of pity. In some parts evilly disposed beggars are still called *tu-lu-tzŭ*, so it is possible that it is a term of pity, and meant, pity the poor aborigine. Some explain by saying the *ku-fei* were to be feared because of their number and character while the *lu-fei* were to pitied because of their extreme poverty. This explanation, which seems reasonable, makes the term *ku-lu-tzŭ* mean robbers and beggars; and it may have been applied by the Mongol and Manchu troops who came to the province to restore order.

As the Ch'ing dynasty gradually got control of the country the *ku-lu-tzŭ* were dispersed, and began to be spoken of as *p'i-fei* (痞匪), which means obstructionists. They were also jokingly called *hsien-ta-lang* (閒打浪), or idle wave beaters; this is now contracted to *ta-lang-êrh*, and seems to mean one who lives by his wits or his luck.

These obstructionists lived in blue tents, and were used as entertainers at funerals or festivities. On such occasions they pitched their tents at the door of the dwelling house

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595 where they were invited and opened a gambling booth for the entertainment of the visitors.

Such entertainers were divided into two distinct classes, the red cash and the black cash fraternity. The latter made secret vows amid the sacrificial burnings of the incense hall, carried arms, and lived by burglaries. The red cash fraternity occupied themselves with slitting open cash bags or cutting off the last 200 cash on a string of cash. If any red cash brother got caught and was branded on the face he was at once degraded into the black cash brotherhood. These two classes exist to-day, the red cash people being gamblers and pickpockets by daylight while the black cash brethren live by burglary in the dark.[1]

The settlers from other provinces naturally hated all *ku-lu-tzŭ* and called them "rats" because of their nocturnal habits and because they so readily disappeared at the approach of the enemy. In the south of the province any one with the look of an aborigine is still called a rat. But the curse has come home to roost, for in Hupei and Hunan all Ssŭch'uanese are now called by this term, whatever their extraction. In retaliation the Hupei people in Ssŭch'uan are contemptuously termed "Hupei bean-curd."

In spite of government and settlers the *ku-lu-tzŭ* have never been exterminated, and they continue to style themselves the Han Liu.

The terms "Han Liu" and *ku-fei* seem synonymous, the former being used by the brethren, the latter being applied to them by the officials. The former term implies their wish to preserve the ancient Han ideals and aspirations as against Mongol and Manchu influences. The other term, *ku-fei*, indicates that the officials regard them as malcontents and opponents of law and order.

For many years before the Hsien Fêng reign (1851–62) the "Yellow River was at peace," that is, was free from rebellion. Then the *ku-fei* rose in revolt under the leadership

(1) The red and the black cash must not be confused with the red and the black flags, to be mentioned later.

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of Lan Ta-shun (藍大順) and Li-Tuan-ta (李短韃). The different characters of these two are shown by their nicknames, "Lan hurry up," and "Li go slowly." Though not Ssŭch'uanese they easily persuaded the *ku-fei* to join them against the Manchus. The revolt was quelled by Hunan troops under Viceroy Lo Wên-chung. The remnants of Lan's marauders were scattered in Tsung Ch'ing-chou, Kuan-hsien, and Tai-I hsien. These districts west of the Min River seem to have been also the chief refuge of Chang Hsien-chung's bands, which no doubt accounts for the lawless, ungovernable character of the population there.

After Lo Wên-chung's coming the *ku-fei* began to be called *t'u-fei*, but the former term is still known and is sometimes applied to them by officials. The term *t'u* was used of the aboriginal tribes, and *fei* probably meant they were not fit to be classed as men, *fei-jên* (非人). This term, *fei-jên* (匪人), has been systematically applied to all aborigines all over China.

The meaning of Han Liu is also variously given; some regard it as meaning simply brigands; others say the name means the descendants of Liu Pei (劉備) of the Han dynasty; but it most likely means the descendants of the obstructives and outcasts of the Han period.

It may safely be said that there is now little or no difference between Han Liu, *ku-fei*, *t'u-fei*, *p'ao-ko* (胞哥), *ko-lao* (哥老), and *chiang-hu* (江湖); all are somehow linked up in one great fraternity. The prestige of some brethren extends over several provinces and it would be highly interesting to trace the connection between the Dragon throne and the rolling dragons of the provinces.

The Ko-lao-hui and the Han Liu. With the advent of Lo Wên-chung and the suppression of Lan Ta-shun's revolt about 1855, a new secret society organization seems to have been introduced into the province in the shape of the Ko-lao-hui. Some Chinese state that it was introduced by the government as a check to the Han Liu. It is more generally held, however, that Lo's Hunan braves brought it with them. Many of these soldiers settled in Ssŭch'uan and their brotherhood gradually amalgamated with that of the Han Liu. It would

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575 seem as if there was also a union with some piratical elements. The term *chiang-hu*, so often used, means "rivers and lakes" and is supposed to mean "rovers of the waters." The terms *to-pa-tzŭ* (扡把子), "helmsman"; *ma-t'ou* (碼頭), "anchorage"; *hai* (海), "sea"; *shui* (水), "water"; all seem to point to a piratical origin, but are in constant use in the fraternity.

The Ko-lao-hui was originally divided into eight lodges, each known by a distinctive character, as follows: (1) *jên* (仁), "benevolence"; (2) *i* (義), "rectitude"; (3) *li* (禮), "propriety"; (4) *chih* (智), "wisdom"; (5) *hsin* (信), "sincerity"; (6) *san-yüan* (三元), "the Taoist trinity"; (7) *ssŭ-hsi* (四喜) "four joys"; (8) *wu-fu* (五福), "five happinesses."

All recognize the Benevolent Lodge as being not only the senior, but also the aristocratic part of the brotherhood. Its members are called (清水胞哥) "clear-water womb-brothers"; their conduct is more enlightened and their customs more rigid than in the other lodges. This Benevolent Lodge is now amalgamated with the Western Lodge of ancient Han Liu, and I believe their character-marks are interchangeable.

In the second, or Rectitude Lodge, are massed the turbid-water (渾水) womb-brothers, probably the real Han Liu members; all the lawless elements in the district adjoining Chêngtu are mustered under this Rectitude mark.

In these districts, strange to say, a few belong to the Benevolent Lodge, the majority to the Rectitude Lodge, and the other lodges are mere empty names. In districts on the Yangtze, however, it is not so; there, some of the other lodges are fully occupied and organized; the Ko-lao-hui element seems the stronger there, while in the Chengtu districts the Han Liu element predominates.

Those in the Rectitude Lodge call the brethren of the Benevolent Lodge by the term "uncle." It is sometimes easy to mistake the sworn adoptive relationships for those of blood.

Each lodge has twelve grades of membership, *pai* (排) or *tai* (代).

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The first consists of the presiding elder (坐堂大爺), *tso t'ang ta yeh*, and the vice president, *t'i tiao* (提調) *ta yeh*. The former position is a very important one, since all believe that the success of their meetings rests on the virtues of their president. 575 ●

The second grade is called *Wu shêng* (武聖). Few dare assume the responsibilities of this grade, for their lot in life will then be poor and mouldy and their luck mean and miserable. Some Buddhist or Taoist priests are generally found to shoulder the responsibilities.

The third grade is known as *Hsüan Hou* (桓侯) *san yeh*, Hsüan Hou being Chang Fei (張飛), of the "Peach Orchard" trio.

The fourth grade stands with no representative, in fact no one would be allowed to take a position under the grade even if willing. The cause is superstition; *ssŭ* (四), "four," is akin in sound to *shih* (事), "trouble," and is the same except in tone as *ssŭ* (死), "death."

The fifth grade is called *Kuan shih* (管事) *wu yeh*. This is a very important position, occupied by two men at each "anchorage," known as the red flag and the black flag managers (紅旗), and (黑旗), *Hung ch'i* and *hei ch'i Kuan shih*. Most power is in the hands of the former, while most of the drudgery falls to the latter, who is generally a man of inferior ability or one who has been degraded to that position for some misdemeanour. Sometimes, however, a rich man with plenty of money to lose and no brains for managing business may be made black flag leader. From the sixth grade downwards the grades are simply known by numbers. But number seven is another grade without a representative, its positions being mere empty names. This is owing to the character for "seven" being akin in sound to the character "to slice."

The eighth grade is called *lao pa* (老八), or *jao pa* (么八), and the last grade is called *lao jao* or *hsiao lao jao*.

Any one may buy his way to the top of the Society, *i pu têng t'ien* (一步登天), "rising to heaven at one step." Such a one enters the Benevolent Lodge as a senior brother, and is

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● 575 called *hsien p'ai* (閒排) *ta yeh* or "leisure-grade brother." Another term for such is *mao ting* (帽頂), or "cap top."

The entrance fee for one and all is 1,280 cash. A candidate, *hsin fu* (新福), must find some one to introduce him and also a guarantor for his good faith. All recruits first enter the grade *lao jao*, but those with ability soon get promoted. On entrance the introducer and guarantor must have presents, and all along the line superiors must be honoured and humoured with gifts. The rank and file of the Rectitude Lodge on meeting the elders of the Benevolent Lodge have to show respect by a three-fold kotow. This is called "one shot with three reports" (一砲三響), *i p'ao san hsiang*. If the knocks of the head on the ground are not distinctly heard it is considered a lack of reverence.

Meetings are generally held in out-of-the-way villages or in some large secluded temple. They are called *k'ai t'ang* (開堂), "to open the hall"; *shao hui* (燒會), "meeting to burn (incense?)"; *tso fang shou* (做方手), which probably means the "crossing of the hands to the four points of the compass"; *tso hsien shih* (做賢事), "practising the acts of the worthies."

These gatherings are generally held at the time of some festival such as the Single Sword Festival (單刀會), the 13th of the 5th moon; the Ch'ing Ming (清明) Festival, about April 5; the Yü Lan (盂蘭), Festival in the 7th moon; and at the New Year. In this way Society business may be done in better security and the officials are deceived. Expenses are met by contributions and entrance fees from novices, by fines for misdemeanours, etc. An elder brother of the Benevolent Lodge is generally invited to preside or "sit on the dragon's head" (坐龍頭), *tso lung t'ou*. He is treated with great respect and formality.

On a dais in the centre of the meeting place is a tablet to Kuan Yü, which is worshipped by all. Before the tablet swords are hung from the roof, and it is supposed that the fear of a sword falling on them will prevent people from worshipping with wrong motives.

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Younger members are detached to guard the entrances; they scrutinize every comer so as to guard against attack or surprise by the officials. 575

The red and the black flag leaders make orations, which are mere gibberish to the uninitiated; the list of members' names is presented on the dais and worshipped; the president reads aloud the rules of the Society; the novices are introduced by their guarantors to the *Kuan shih* of the 5th grade and he announces their nomination and reception into the lodge.

The following oath is then read: 我們今夜晚結拜一不當頭子二不當眼睛如有當頭子當眼睛照香而死照雞而亡. The meaning is roughly this: "We are met here in conclave to-night; if there should be any false ones come to spy may they die as this incense and perish as this fowl." The incense is then ignited and chopped in two; the chicken's head is chopped off, the blood drained into a bowl o[illegible]e, and all the company drink it.

The new members must then worship the tablet beneath the suspended blades, repeat the above oath and drink of the wine. Matters of discipline are attended to; some members are degraded and some expelled. Where time for repentance is allowed, the offender has to kneel before the tablet and apply a dagger to his thigh till the blood flows freely. This is called *p'u chiao-tao* (撲尖刀), "falling on the knife." The culprit may choose another way of showing penitence—by putting nails on the ground, points upward, and rolling on them naked till his body is bloody. This is called *Kun ting pan*, (滾釘板), "rolling on the nailed board."

The wretch to whom the tribunal refuses space for repentance is at once led out to some grove or other secluded spot and despatched with the sword; the body is thrown into the river or left to be devoured by dogs.

Those who have done meritorious service to the whole Society or for the senior brethren are raised in rank and honoured by the assembly.

The president then announces that the particular meeting will be known as such and such a hill or water or hall; this enables new members to refer to their initiation without

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575 divulging the place of meeting. The novices who first enter the Society and have their positions defined later are said "to first ascend the hill and then plant the willow." The reverse is said of those who before entering state what position they will hold; and it is these who provide the midnight feast for the assembly.

A member absenting himself from the meetings is punished by being reduced in rank for the second offence, and excluded from the Society for the third. This means he will no longer have the Society's protection; and though while law and order are maintained he may be safe, when there are disturbances he will most likely pay for broken vows with his life.

Each district has an "anchorage" (碼頭), *ma t'ou*, also known as *kung-k'ou* or *t'ang-k'ou* since the use of *kung-t'ang* (公堂) has been forbidden by law. Each anchorage has a resident elder living in the hall. These halls are often in the houses of the elder brother himself. He keeps a register of affiliated halls and of his own sworn brethren; he entertains guests from a distance and advises or helps brethren who appeal to him for protection or money. Members from other districts should notify their arrival; otherwise if they get into any trouble they will get no help till they have owned their fault. The elder brother of a hall has tremendous power; his orders (上覆), *shang-fu*, ought to be obeyed without questioning by every loyal Han Liu.

Certain classes, such as barbers, chairbearers, etc., are not allowed to enter the Society. Persons who try to pass themselves off as *chiang-hu* or pretend to higher rank than they really hold are punished by a special tribunal.

The book of rules of the Society is called *hai-ti-shu*, "book of the sea-bottom"; its chief tenets are filial piety, rectitude, benevolence and reverence.

The use of passwords is common. Without knowing the password an entrance might possibly be got into a secret meeting; but I am told it would be practically impossible for the offender to get out alive.

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Within the Rectitude Lodge there are cliques whose influence is wholly evil; these are called *hui-fei*, "Society rascals." 575

Women play a large part in the Society; leading women being called *nü-kuang-kun* (女光棍) or "female polished sticks." Youths have a juvenile society organized on the model of the adult Society and known as the *pang* (棒) *pang hui* or Cudgel Society. They exchange cards, make vows, conduct fights and organize petty persecutions of those whom they dislike.

Each anchorage has a *ying-p'in-hui* (迎賓) with a fund for the entertainment of visitors.

The salutations of the Society are very complex. The general term for them is *tiu-ch'ien-tzŭ* (丟簽子), or "casting the tally." Salutations to the chief, second, third, and fifth grades are by placing the hand on the shoulder, elbow, forearm or wrist. Between equals the salutation called "right and left twist (左右歪子), *tso-yu-wai-tzŭ*, is used. Thus the status of members can be recognized at once without enquiry.

A country robber is known as *pang-k'e*, "cudgel guest," and the keeper of a robber's den is called (窩戶) *wo-hu*. Such a keeper has great influence, and may be the helmsman of an anchorage. He receives a large share of the booty. Stolen goods are hidden for a time, then taken into the capital and pawned for a term of years. Later they are dyed and altered and sold to second-hand dealers. The helmsman is nearly always acquainted with the reasons for murders, arsons and robberies in his locality and with the means used.

I have learned on good authority that many people go from home ostensibly on business, but really for dishonourable purposes, for work they can do at a distance with a good conscience, though they would not degrade themselves by doing it near home. If they should happen to relieve of his goods some notable in the Society, the property will soon be restored if he applies in the proper quarter at once, before it is sold or pawned.

It must not be supposed that only the poor and illiterate compose the Han Liu Sodality: many sons of the country

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575 gentry join through love of money and adventure. Thus robberies are made by the poor and half-starved so much as by the strong and able-bodied who are in comfortable circumstances. In fact, but for the connivance and help of the rich it would be impossible for the rogues to carry on their depredations. People say that when a robber gang is equipped for action and makes its appearance at dead of night it is a terrifying sight. Torches are fixed in their caps or hats, their faces are painted with hideous colors, they are armed with battering rams, swords, clubs, crowbars, and latterly with rifles and Mauser pistols. Their attack is sudden and determined, but at the slightest alarm they retire, carrying with them what silver and valuables they have been able to secure. Prior to the raid some servant has been bribed to reveal where the silver is kept.

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If any of the gang should be caught, there is danger that secrets may be let out; but some of the descendants of Lan Ta-shun's bands will defy torture and scorn death. No officials can get their secrets either by torture or cajolery; and no severities used on them seem to have any moral effect on the rest of the gang; indeed it sometimes seems as though the more are killed the more the membership grows.

575 The chief Han Liu ideal is liberty, which means to them anarchy, selfishness and depravity, and it may be said that the Society is always "agin the government." They are under a kind of military rule, make their own laws and reserve all rights of interpreting and administering them.

There is, however, a growing tendency to social equality and the senior brother does not enjoy the same blind obedience as formerly. Among certain classes his word is no longer law. The tendency is to follow a popular man apart from his social standing; but such a man soon finds himself in a difficult and dangerous position.

In such an organization there must be jealousy and strife. Even in peaceful times deep enmity may exist on personal grounds, between two anchorages in the same street. These factions have been compared to two tigers in the same forest,—fighting must ensue. Suspicion and envy develop

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into hatred and murder. Officials take advantage and use one faction against another; then secrets are divulged, mutual recriminations follow, and hatred is engendered which may last for generations, one victim after another on both sides being murdered in revenge. A son's duty to avenge a parent's wrong cannot be shirked.

Such conditions produce in members a cruel and relentless disposition, and foster a suspicious and revengeful nature.

As already mentioned, the place held by women in this secret society is not a small one. Many are sworn members, and the mothers and wives are often able assistants of male members. They spy out the land, hide the booty and screen the guilty. It is a rare thing for a woman to be put to death for implication in robbery; and it must be remembered that the mother of adventurous sons will also rear daughters of a similar character, who in turn become the mothers of a new generation of desperate adventurers; and thus a constant succession is assured in spite of official reprisals on the males. Here lies a social problem of immense importance, which might well tax the heart and brain of some great statesman. If brute force could cure the moral and social ills of this people it would by this time have had some effect; but torture and capital punishment have proved futile, and nothing short of a moral and spiritual regeneration will change the Han Liu adventurer into a law-abiding citizen.

This regeneration seems especially necessary for the female population, for the saying, "She who rocks the cradle rules the world" is true in Western China—she who carries the baby rules the land. So long as we have a race of women vicious enough to murder their own offspring in large numbers, to bind their daughters' feet, to abet the men in every crime, so long we shall have a race of brigands and buccaneers to terrify the country at every opportunity.

The hypnotic sects work secretly with the wiliness of serpents till they gain a secure hold; the naturalistic sects are full of bluster and pantomime, yet their propaganda is secret and swift. When either of these elements gains the upper hand the whole district is made to quake. Their methods of black-

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575 mail are inimitably ingenious ; their revenge on traitors, swift and unswerving. Their cruelties to enemies are indescribable. When their passions are roused their victim will be hacked to pieces, each person cutting off just as much as he desires of the common enemy's flesh. The more daring and cunning he has been the more is his liver and gall wished for, since it is believed that by eating these one's own valour and cunning will be increased.

Before the Revolution of 1911 and the organization of the Railway League, the Society men always had to be reckoned with ; but since that date their influence has been supreme, and no one dare give offence to them, however much grieved or injured. If a Society rascal is arrested neighbors dare not refuse to bail him out, and whole families may be ruined for the divulging of a secret. The best policy for all is to humour the members and avoid any action that would rouse their wrath.

The Railway League (同志會), *t'ung chih hui ;* etc. The Han Liu, true to its ancient traditions, is still the enemy of all reform, and is ever ready for any pretext of making trouble. The proposal to introduce railways into the province caused the formation of the so-called Railway League, in Chinese, "The Society of united purpose for protection of the way." It was really an amalgamation of the Confucian Society with the Han Liu for the purpose of opposing a railway system financed by foreign capital. The new name should not mislead the student ; it was simply a revival of the revolutionary brotherhood reinforced by the addition of the weaker Confucian Society. The League leaders were the Han Liu leading elder brothers, and the organization was the anchorage system of the Han Liu.

A rebellion broke out first in Kwan hsien and the other districts already specified as full of brigand stock. The lawless wretches carried devastation and anarchy wherever they marched. They got more than they expected or wanted, but at the downfall of the Manchus they immediately set up the Han Republic (大漢), Ta Han. With the new government

3: Hutson M-5 (no date) 1921 AF16 Southwest China AF16

many of these outlaws got wealth and were decorated with medals for services rendered to the country, were much honoured by the Republican party, and became honoured officials of the new government. At that period the people had no one to appeal to for redress, since a magistrate was less powerful than a robber; as the Chinese said, "Robbery was done according to law." The poor fled their homes and suffered terribly, and the rich were blackmailed and bullied without mercy. Only those who passed through that crisis know how paralyzing was the grip of the Han Liu octopus. 575

Later on such taunts were thrown at the Ssŭch'uan Republican party that they determined to reform and started a new Society called the Hsi hua Kung hui (西華公會). The purpose was to dissolve the Railway League and then to eradicate the lawless elements of the Shê hui (社會) or Republican party, raising the rest to a higher standard of citizenship. A system of badges was instituted by which the senior brethren in each county might be recognized, and each clan head was made responsible for all of his name in his district.

Once more the Han Liu Society was faithful to itself, refused to acknowledge the new Society and declined to be reformed. The difficulty thus created was only relieved by an official order to dissolve all Secret Societies, making all alike illegal. The new Society melted its silver badges, but it seems impossible to hope for the extermination of the Han Liu, which, in spite of all adversity, has thriven for so many centuries. There have been later attempts at reform but they seem futile. The Society has entered into ninety per cent. of the homes, permeated all society, controlled well-nigh every institution in Western Shu and probably in a much wider area.

46: Liao S-5 (1943-1945)1947 AF16 Southwest China AF16

The Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan[1]

Liao T'ai-ch'u

•575 OF THE VARIOUS Chinese secret societies functioning in Szechuan province, the most prominent is the Ko Lao Hui (Brothers' Society). Its importance, especially in rural areas, is very great indeed. Involving many persons in all classes of society, it influences almost every aspect of daily life—social, political and economic. There are differing accounts of its origin. According to one theory, it was started as an offshoot of an older society. Another account attributes its creation to an underground movement opposed to the Manchu rulers of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912). Still another connects it with late Ming (1368-1644) and early Ch'ing intellectuals who opposed the Manchus. In all likelihood, however, such a powerful society did not originate in response to a single stimulus. The factors which contributed decisively to the development of the Ko Lao Hui must have included loyalty to the Ming rulers (involving a glorification of self-sacrifice), difficulties of existence under the Ch'ing, and popular accounts of generous, brotherly acts performed by well-known figures in the past.

The Ko Lao Hui was probably founded in East China in the early Ch'ing period by persons of some education who were dissatisfied with Manchu rule. Its original aim was simple: opposition to the existing government. Members of different families and of different classes were welcomed and, as long as they supported this aim, were considered to be brothers. Equality and the eight virtues (filial piety, love for one's brothers and sisters, loyalty to one's superiors, faithfulness, courtesy, shame, probity, and righteous self-sacrifice), and especially the last virtue, *yi*[2] (which embraces both righteousness and generosity), were practiced religiously. At one period, characters representing these

[1] Part of the material on which these notes are based was collected during 1943-45 in the towns of Chung Yi and Chiu Li, in Chengtu district.

[2] *Yi* is highly honored in China. In the Ko Lao Hui, *yi* is regarded as symbolizing the unity of the society and the highest ideal of all members. *Ko Lao*, which means (older) brother, implies the idea of equality and *yi*.

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575 eight virtues were written inside members' gowns for purposes of identification.

As time passed and new members were admitted, the influence of the Ko Lao Hui spread and its activities grew more diversified, leading to an admixture of bad elements.[3] As a result of internal changes and oppression by the Ch'ing government (which knew of its existence and sought to liquidate it), the Ko Lao Hui moved gradually westward, following the course of the Yangtze River, and settled first in Hunan and Hupeh provinces and eventually in Szechuan. By the beginning of the present century, branches existed in most parts of Szechuan.

The Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan may be divided geographically into two main groups. The first comprises the branches on the Chengtu Plain, which includes 14 districts (*hsien*)—a total area of some 1,350 square miles within which are 1⅓ million acres of the richest agricultural land in China. This area is popularly regarded as the center of the Ko Lao Hui world:[4] it is estimated that 70 per cent of the male population belongs to the society. Members here are known for their interference in local (and, to some extent, provincial) political affairs, for their abandonment of most secret-society traditions, regulations and special terminology, and for their criminal activities.

The various branches in this area are in close touch with one another: they provide mutual assistance as need arises and cooperate in pursuing common policies even to the point of armed action. A branch is expected to harbor members of other branches who may have violated government laws and been forced to decamp from their own villages.[5] Since there is no over-all coordinating body above the branches, inter-branch cooperation is not always flawless. Nevertheless, information travels sufficiently speedily from branch to branch to enable them

[3] The admission, for example, of a large number of demobilized soldiers in Hunan province toward the end of the Ch'ing period greatly altered the original structure of the organization, extending and debasing its activities.

[4] In the small suburban community of Chung Yi, eight miles northwest of Chengtu city, 19 of the section heads (*pao chang*) are members of the society. In Chiu Li, another community three miles west of Chengtu, the village head (*hsiang chang*) himself is the leading member for the entire district of some 100 square miles.

[5] In December 1945 the branch in Chung Yi was taking care of a leader of a neighboring branch who, having disagreed with the government about a little matter of military conscription, had caused his subordinates to fire on certain government forces, killing a number of them. At Chung Yi he received royal treatment, enjoying good food and company as well as the respect of the local members.

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to function as though they were under a single command. Inter-branch relations are, however, becoming steadily less close; a program involving common action in an area larger than a district is rare nowadays. 575.

The second main group of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan, less highly organized than the first, is situated along the Yangtze River. Limitations of space prevent consideration of this group in these notes.

EXACTLY WHEN Ko Lao Hui activities extended all over the Chengtu Plain is not known, but it is thought to have been some time in the late Ch'ing period. Now every district supports at least one branch of the society. Each branch, considered as a separate administrative unit, has its own (geographical) sphere of influence; members are not supposed to engage in society activities outside of its boundaries.

The highest post in a branch is that of director (*to pa tze,* literally "helmsman"). Not all directors are equally popular or prominent or of equal influence in society affairs. Certain directors owe their prominence to advanced age, exemplary moral conduct, or some other important attribute. A few of the most influential are active in public affairs and can make or break district, and even provincial, administration. The post of director is not strictly elective, but one may become director only with the approval of other members of one's branch.

Although all members are considered to be brothers of one family, eight or nine different ranks exist in each branch. (Minor differences in ranking are found among different branches.) Ranks are conferred originally by the director at the annual initiation ceremony. The rank or degree conferred depends on the recipient's general past experience, his education and his financial standing. But the mere attainment of high rank does not carry with it possession of any particular post.

Below the director are several officers, each assigned a particular function. For example, the vice-director is supposed to be a saintly figure who can settle disagreements between members by means of persuasion and good will rather than by invoking the "law". There are also two controllers or managers, one in charge of business within the branch and the other charged with inter-branch affairs. Except in administrative matters of prime importance, about which they must consult the director, these two officials run the branch: they look after its accounts and properties, arbitrate disagreements, keep records, organize the two grand annual assemblies, receive guests and visitors, etc.

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•575 Inter-branch affairs may include such activities as the exchange of important information concerning changes in executive officers, deaths of members, expulsion of undesirables, attitudes toward specific government regulations (such as the conscription plan in 1944), invitations to attend functions, proposals for settling conflicts between branches or their members. Not long ago a member of one branch was for some reason severely beaten up by members of another. After prolonged negotiations, the latter branch gave an elaborate 16-table feast to express its apologies and regret, and the incident was thus amicably concluded.

Refugees[8] from other branches are received by the controller. On arriving, the refugee enters a convenient tea house, seats himself at a table on which he places a piece of pork, and orders a cup of tea or hot water. The keeper of the tea house, who is familiar with this ceremony, sends at once for the controller of the local branch. The latter appears speedily and puts a series of questions to the refugee who must reply in appropriate, extremely technical terms. If the refugee proves to be an offender against government (i.e., not against Ko Lao Hui) laws, the controller will offer him shelter, or sufficient funds, clothes and the like to enable him to reach another destination of his choice.

According to the formal constitution of the society, each branch has several officers in addition to those already mentioned. These include an official in charge of worship, a keeper of the seal, a protocol officer, a preparer of the budget, a supervisor of social affairs, a welfare officer for new members, a supervisor of punishments, an executioner, a guard, a watchman, ushers, etc. In reality, however, besides the director, vice-director and the two controllers, there are only one or two members who help in running the branch. Details of organization have been greatly simplified to accord with the present social environment of the Ko Lao Hui. Thus, the director may call on any other member to do errands for him. Except during the two grand meetings each year (when a temple or tea house is commandeered), society administration is carried on in the home of the director or of the controller concerned: an office in the modern sense does not exist. Most of the leading members spend their spare time in the tea houses gossiping with one another. If one does not know their habits, these men are hard to find.

[8] Usually these are men who, having violated some important government law, have thought it advisable to leave home for a while.

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The Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan

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In addition to occasional executive conferences called to consider urgent matters and attended by a few important members, each branch holds two formal meetings every year. All members are expected to attend.

One of these assemblies, held on the thirteenth day of the fifth moon, is devoted to ceremonies involving admission of new members, promotion of old members, punishment of evil-doers, and, where executives have recently died, election of successors. The initiation ceremony is spectacular and takes place in a temple or tea house containing an altar decorated with portraits, statues or spirit tablets of Kuang Yün Chang, reputed to have been a founder of the Ko Lao Hui. Numerous lighted candles stand on the altar next to the sacrifices (usually meat, chicken and fruit); couplets celebrating the ideals of loyalty and sacrifice for a cause (*yi*) cover the walls on both sides of the altar.

Entering the hall, each candidate kowtows repeatedly before the altar to pay his respects to Kuang Yün Chang. Next he is catechized briefly by a controller. After having sworn to observe all the rules of the society and to treat his fellow-members like brothers, he turns and kowtows to the director, who occupies a prominent seat. The director, hiding his face behind a fan (perhaps to conceal his embarrassment at such an honor), announces the rank of the candidate, whereupon the latter expresses repeated thanks for the rank that has just been bestowed upon him. He then turns to other important members, bowing or kowtowing and indicating his joy. The candidate directs his final bows to his two sponsors and two guarantors.[7] Finally his name is entered on the record, and he is then accepted as a new member. The occasion ordinarily ends with mutual congratulations, the explosion of firecrackers, and a big feast given by the society or by a rich newcomer.

As a rule the new member receives a certificate of membership. This may contain, on the first page, the name and seal of the branch; on the second, a copy of Sun Yat-sen's will, surmounted by his portrait; on the third, a few lines of Chiang Kai-shek's teachings and his portrait; on the fourth, the society motto and the eight virtues; on the fifth, sig-

[7] A candidate must have four such old members to support his application for admission. In addition he has to pay an initiation fee, which in 1945 was approximately CNC$2,000.

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575 natures of the branch officials, followed by the name and rank of the recipient; and on the sixth page, the date of issuance.[8]

The second function of the "fifth-moon" assembly is promotion of members in rank. Promotions are granted most often in recognition of heroic or otherwise admirable behavior toward the community or the director, financial contributions to the society, assistance rendered to fellow members, and the like. Members in the upper ranks are much more apt to receive promotions than those of lower degree, who must remain back-benchers indefinitely. Having once gained the position of director, a man relinquishes the post only on his death. Incidentally, the death of a man of such importance as a director is mourned by the entire community, non-members as well as members. The mourning period lasts seven weeks.[9]

575 681 The third function of the "fifth-moon" meeting has to do with punishments of members. The Ko Lao Hui has an extensive code of regulations and disciplines, but the process of change which has affected other aspects of the society has also made this code more or less obsolete. The myriad regulations that were strictly enforced at one stage in the history of the Ko Lao Hui were designed to promote brotherhood, the observance of loyalty and *yi*, filial piety, a proper attitude toward women, patriotism, respect for the aged, and contempt for money. Nowadays there is a marked variation among different branches in the strictness with which rules are observed and infractions punished; the degree depends upon the ethical standards observed by the members in each branch. A man who has violated a regulation of the society is first reproved by the director of his branch or by his intimates. Serious crimes are dealt with at once through a meeting of a few prominent members without waiting for a grand assembly. In consequence, the cases considered at the grand assembly are usually only minor misdemeanors. These are discussed briefly before the director announces the punishment to be applied to each case.

Punishments are divided into several grades: death (by ignominious

[8] This list illustrates the extent to which Ko Lao Hui ritual has accommodated itself to present-day fashions.

[9] After the death of a director in Chung Yi, a large building in the market center was set aside for mourning activities, while numberless couplets, expressing sorrow at the loss of a great leader, and pieces of white silk and sacrifices in the form of goods and money decorated the main street. Mourners came from great distances. Even Sun Yat-sen's death had not created such a stir.

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slow dismemberment, burial alive or shooting), beating with a rod, beating with a ruler, and public degradation (causing the culprit to kneel on a special bench in public with a red tape on his back describing his crime). Except for the death penalty, punishments are meted out with the intention of correcting rather than hurting members. No one likes to see a fellow-member punished. In fact, although punishments exist in name, in reality most miscreants receive only a warning or reproof. If a case is extremely serious, the criminal is "thrown away"—that is, shot. The society prefers to execute its own members instead of delivering them to the government, for the latter course implies an insult to the whole society. Expulsion from the branch may be substituted for the death penalty; in such an event, the criminal will not be taken in by any other branch.

The second grand assembly of the year, held on the thirtieth day of the twelfth moon, is a time of celebration and house-cleaning, with some gambling and opium-smoking on the side. Neither of these latter activities is regarded as criminal by the society; they bring in vast sums of money to the society exchequer. Since this assembly occurs at (Chinese) New Year, which is celebrated for at least two weeks, members have a grand opportunity for social intercourse. During this meeting there is usually discussion of general society policy and of financial reports, funds are collected from members according to their financial status, elections are held to fill vacant positions, and reports on recent important events are delivered. Often, too, promotions and demotions are announced; this is done particularly in the case of a branch that has more "good" than "bad" members. Steps taken to clear the branch of bad elements are announced, warnings are given to undesirables, and dates are set for the expulsion of major criminals. Every one sits down together to share the last meal of the year, thus symbolizing the unity and brotherhood which bind the members.

THERE ARE several reasons for the spread of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan, and for the extension of its activities into so many aspects of present-day society. For one thing, in a country such as China, where law enforcement does not extend to the small hamlets or individual farms, persons sharing similar interests are inclined to band together to protect those interests even though by doing so they may bring disaster upon others. The majority of members possessing real power in the Ko

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575 Lao Hui of the Chengtu Plain belong to the middle class. Each owns between five and eight acres of land, and derives his income directly or indirectly from the land on which he lives; in addition, he may own a store or two in the market center. These people regard the society as a form of social insurance which will guard the well-being of their families, benefit their business activities, and protect their properties from intrusion, alienation or undue taxation. Initially the Ko Lao Hui arose in response to ultra-conservative needs, for it maintains the social order, upholds accepted standards of behavior, and affords its members protection in case of disaster.[10] Such security is desired most in an area where lawlessness prevails and where provision for Western types of insurance—accident, personal or social—is lacking. The Ko Lao Hui is in fact a mutual assistance association, a means of safeguarding one's property and security through the protection of one's neighbors' property and security.

When a large number of middle-class people band together, they often gain a controlling voice in community affairs; whoever wishes to remain in the community must work either with or against them. As a result, members of the upper class are apt to cooperate with them; sometimes, indeed, because of their superior knowledge of administration, these upper-class representatives may assume the leadership in a society branch. Occasionally, well-educated and social-minded persons must participate in the activities of the society if they wish to remain and work in a community. Lower-class persons, too, discovering that they must depend on the society for a living, enter its lower ranks. The practice of *yi* offers the lower classes a form of insurance against personal misfortune. If a lower-class member falls sick or dies, his family will be looked after. In certain areas, tenants who are members of the Ko Lao Hui cannot be evicted no matter how often ownership of the land may change. If one obeys orders from above, one need have no fear of being unemployed; in the event that such orders contravene government laws, one can depend on being housed and fed and cared for in general while being sought by the government. If a high-ranking member commits a crime and is (for a wonder) energetically pursued by the

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[10] In Chengtu in 1942 the author met a Ko Lao Hui member who, though he had lost all of his limbs and thus his earning power, was nevertheless enjoying the company of four young concubines in a large and well-appointed house. It transpired that his comfortable situation was due entirely to the assumption of his fellow-members that, since he had been a good brother in the society before his misfortune, he now merited the very best treatment.

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government, the society will provide and pay for a substitute to confess to the crime and to suffer the consequences in his stead.

Another reason for the continued existence of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan is the confusion and disorder which have prevailed there in recent years. During the war the central government, which had established its capital in Szechuan and was anxious to avoid unnecessary unrest, encouraged the provincial government in its lax administration. The attitude of compromise adopted toward most problems fostered the development of localism and gave the Ko Lao Hui an opportunity to increase the scope and variety of its activities to a point where it interfered with many aspects of government administration. In any case, government in Szechuan has been so corrupt for so long that the people have no confidence in it.[11] The war years simply aggravated popular dissatisfaction with and distrust of the government, so that any new official measure is received with suspicion. The people have become accustomed to managing their affairs and settling their disagreements by extra-governmental means. It is natural for them to turn to the local Ko Lao Hui branch director, who represents, in theory at least, the virtues of brotherhood, filial piety and proper behavior toward women. Thus the director has become not only the possessor of power but a symbol of righteousness as well. Disagreements between non-members of the society, as well as between members, are now commonly referred to him for settlement.

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The Ko Lao Hui is not a political party, nor does it entertain any pretensions regarding the shaping of national policy—so long as the interests of its middle-class founders are not endangered. Thus far Ko Lao Hui political activities have remained defensive. Individual members may occupy important government posts, but the society as a whole remains aloof from Kuomintang party politics. The society has voiced sharp criticism of Communism, which it regards as inimical to middle-class interests. While adopting a *laissez-faire* attitude toward politics,

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[11] The demobilization, in the closing years of the Sino-Japanese war, of many Szechuanese troops without adequate provision for their reemployment greatly swelled the number of undesirable members of the society, and in turn made things more difficult for the government. The possession by society members of an extraordinarily large number of small arms aggravates the situation. In the course of his investigation of two districts near Chengtu, the author learned that nearly every member of the Ko Lao Hui in those localities owned a pistol or a rifle. In Chengtu district one out of every two members possessed such arms without a license. Leaders not infrequently had late-model machine guns.

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575 the Ko Lao Hui keeps the closest watch over government policy, especially where it considers its own interests to be concerned.

662 An illustration of how the Ko Lao Hui functions in this respect may be seen in the typical case of Huang Jun Chin, branch director in the village of Yuan T'ung. To the people who live in it, Yuan T'ung seems less a village than a country of which Huang is king. He owns some 400 acres of land and several thousand side arms which are borne by 3,000 men (all society members) directly under his command. In the county seat he and some of his men occupy a huge mansion fortified with machine-gun emplacements. Several close relatives hold important positions in the municipal and provincial governments. Although they are paid by the county government, two platoons of guards and policemen are armed with Huang's guns and are answerable to him alone. His men are also in the magistrate's office; in fact, the magistrate is no more than a figurehead whose function it is to transmit government orders to Huang and to await his instructions. The county administration takes no action without Huang's prior consent. He not only presides over the county council, but appoints all of its other members. Huang's case is typical of the power of the society which, though essentially non-political, frequently interferes with, and occasionally assumes direct control of, county government.[12]

575 Each branch of the society derives its regular income from a number of sources, of which opium dens are the most important. In one 548 locality there are ten such dens, each run by a different high-ranking member. Each must contribute a definite sum to the branch, as must the semi-secret gambling houses and brothels. Illegal transactions in prohibited goods such as arms, gasoline and other vital war materials are effected under the supervision and protection of the society, which collects a fee on each transaction. Another source of income is the "mar- 575 ket" where, though no goods are handled, such commodities as rape 437 seed, rice and the like are bought and sold in wholesale quantities; since no goods are in evidence, the government agent, if he is present, sees nothing on which to levy a tax, but the society, keeping a com-

[12] Of course, the society manifests its power in other ways. For example, local coal mines and salt works cannot move their products to market until they have paid the society large sums on each shipment. Before making tours of inspection in the districts of the Chengtu Plain, government officials are expected to notify, and to secure the protection of, Ko Lao Hui officials. This procedure is necessary because bandits, county guards and administrators are usually all members of the society.

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plete record of transactions, collects a tax in place of the government.[13] In addition, the Ko Lao Hui controls many inland communications in the sense that it operates chains of control points similar to customs houses at which merchants and other travelers are stopped for contributions.

Other, irregular sources of income are more difficult to assess. Most big stores within the territory of a branch must present gifts, in cash or in kind, either to the director or to the branch, several times each year. The amount of the contribution depends on the size of the store. Special collections occur frequently and may affect not only businessmen but also landowners, who pay a certain amount on each acre. Although stealing, robbery and kidnapping are not openly encouraged by most branches, members who have committed such crimes usually go to their director and present the branch with a large portion of their gains in return for its protection. (One can usually regain a "lost" article if one knows the right person in the branch to turn to.) Some leaders of the Ko Lao Hui capitalize on the power of the society for private and selfish ends at the expense of non-members, or even of other members, but a portion of their profits are invariably devoted to the needs of the society.[14]

One of the most interesting aspects of the Ko Lao Hui in Szechuan concerns the changes in its forms and activities which have taken place in recent years. Shifts in the needs and interests of communities in which the Ko Lao Hui exists have brought about changes in the motivation and spirit of the society. For example, patriotism—specifically, opposition to the Ch'ing rulers—is thought to have been the main motive for the original establishment of the Ko Lao Hui. But since the disappearance of the Ch'ings as rulers and of the Manchus as a

[13] At one such "market" in 1945 the society branch collected CNC$200 on each *tan* (133 pounds) of rice sold. On an average day 300 *tan* might change hands, resulting in a rake-off, on rice sales alone, of some CNC$60,000. There are eight or nine "market" days each month.

[14] An illustration of how the society looks after its own was afforded by an incident which recently occurred one morning six miles outside of Chengtu. Three cotton dealers, carrying a huge sum of money, were set upon by three highwaymen (Ko Lao Hui members acting on instructions from one of their leaders). A company of road guards, chancing to come upon the scene just after the robbers had secured their loot, started a gun fight which lasted several hours and resulted in the wounding of several guards and the death of two guards and two of the robbers. The surviving robber escaped with the money, all of which was later set aside for the future welfare of the families of the two dead members.

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575 people apart, this source of inspiration has likewise vanished. Ideals of filial piety and of veneration for older persons, though still observed, have lost much of their former appeal as a result of the war and the infiltration of Western thought. On the other hand, *yi* and brotherhood, which are at the core of all Ko Lao Hui activities—particularly those involving social insurance and security—have not only remained cardinal principles of the society but are being observed with greater zeal than ever, largely because the security of the people is increasingly threatened by the present system of government.

575 A prominent characteristic of any secret society is the use of a special terminology by its members. For various reasons—to distinguish members from non-members, to permit members to outwit government authorities, etc.—a secret society, especially in the early stages of development, finds it convenient to designate terms of its own making which differ sufficiently from common usage to enable members to communicate with one another without being understood by the uninitiate. At present, however, the Ko Lao Hui has come so far into the open that nearly everyone knows of its existence and may join it if he so desires. Since most of its activities are common knowledge, there is no longer a need for a secret language with which to conceal them. Instead, a number of new terms have been introduced into Ko Lao Hui parlance, indicating a certain adaptation to changing conditions of society.

575 The progressive relaxation of entrance requirements to a point where almost anyone may join has made for marked local dissimilarities. The 565 wholesale entrance into the Ko Lao Hui of local warlords, retired politicians, corrupt government officials and demobilized soldiers, few of whom are interested primarily in the social aims of the society, is causing the society to engage in an increasing number of undesirable activities while at the same time encouraging the tendency toward separatism among the branches. To a Ko Lao Hui member of the old school, such a trend represents degeneration which must result ultimately in complete separation and dissolution.

575 On the other hand, it is clear that the Ko Lao Hui will retain its power until something can be found to replace it. The government, 668 though well aware of the growing power and influence of the society, has done little to combat it beyond occasionally voicing expressions of alarm. Government officials have been forbidden to join the society, and

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students in government schools have been threatened with expulsion if they become members. But one may question the efficacy of a policy which ignores a manifestation of this kind while permitting it to grow stronger. Surely, it would be better to investigate the Ko Lao Hui—to discover why it exists, how it operates and what are its effects—and then to seek means of reforming it, of converting it into an effective force for improving the welfare of the people. For the *basic* principles of the Ko Lao Hui are not anti-social. And if the political situation in the province remains chaotic; if corruption in government continues; if unemployment, especially of demobilized soldiers, is not combated; if popular education remains completely inadequate; and if some sort of social insurance is not provided in the present period of rehabilitation; then, the people will certainly continue to look to the Ko Lao Hui for protection and for a livelihood.

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Chengtu, Szechuan, 1946